

THE PARISH OF CASTLETOWN COONAGH.

SITUATION. This Parish is situated in the Barony of Coonagh and is bounded on the north and west by the Parish of Doon; on the south by that of Oola and on the east by the County of Tipperary.

NAME. This Parish has borrowed its name from Mac Brian Coonagh's Castle, near which the old Parish Church is situated.

The old Church of this Parish is still in tolerable preservation, but not more than four centuries old. It is forty nine feet in length on the inside and twenty feet in breadth. Its side walls are about ten feet in height and three feet in thickness and well built.

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The east gable contains a window which is pointed on the inside, but square at the top on the outside, where it measures about six feet in height and eighteen inches in width. The south wall contains a narrow window placed at the distance of three feet five inches from the east gable and measuring on the outside four feet four inches in height and five and a half inches in width and widening to three feet on the inside.

The doorway, which was placed on the south wall at the distance of ten feet from the west gable, is destroyed except a small corner of its west side. The west gable is destroyed down to the height of the side walls and there is a breach in the north wall, but all the rest are in very good preservation.

This building was never divided into nave and choir.

A short distance to the west of this Church stand, on the brink of a stream called Abhainn a Phá, the ruins of the chief Castle of Mac Brian Coonagh, now generally called Castletown Coonagh. It is a magnificent ruin consisting of a large keep with a high square tower at its east side. This tower measures on the outside eighteen feet ten inches from north to south and ten feet seven inches from east to west; a spiral staircase leads to its top; it is entered from the outside by a round-headed doorway placed on the east side and measuring seven feet seven inches in height, but its breadth could not be easily ascertained as its east side is totally destroyed. It was constructed of cut lime stone.

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The keep or house part of this Castle measures on the inside thirty feet four inches in breadth, but its length cannot be now ascertained as the west wall is totally destroyed. The part of the north wall now remaining is fifty feet long, but it was much longer originally. The tower above mentioned is not less than eighty feet in height and the north wall of the keep is about fifty feet in height and eight feet four inches in thickness at the base.

Near the south west side of this fortress a gigantic fragment of the south wall is laid prostrate, but the stones adhere as firmly as if the whole were a solid rock.

Examined by me.

John O'Donovan.

Tipperary.
Aug. 18th 1840.
